

KICKSHAWS

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Readers are encouraged to send their own favorite linguistic kickshaws to the Kickshaws Editor. All answers appear in the Answers and Solutions at the end of the issue. Guest editors will appear occasionally.

Shakespeare in Words and Picture

This portrait of Shakespeare is made of the letters in his name. However, it's easier to "read" the picture than the word.



Cities of the Dictionary

Jay Ames composed a geo-dictionary puzzle. As he describes it "Some years ago, Bob Needham of the Toronto Globe & Mail proposed a list of retirement cities to which some of us could go spend our golden years. And, by using known American or Canadian postal codes in conjunction, [he] came up with such dillies as OOLA LA, METRE CAL, PARDON ME and a bunch of others. One of my own contributions was OOMPA PA for German bandsmen, and PIGG PENN for swine farmers or breeders."

Jay then spotted a number of cities not too well-hidden in his Webster's New World Dictionary. "The following might tickle a funny bone or two (maybe not). You'll need to check 'em out for yourselves. I'm sure many of you will find infinitely more than this double handful of cities". Can you provide a -CITY word for each description? The numbers indicate how many letters are in the word in question; for example,

"[city] for nuns and virgins (8)" clues PUDICITY.

- 1 for rapists and ax-murderers (8)
- 2 for daredevils and bungee-jumpers (8)
- 3 for maids and stay-at-homes (11)
- 4 for public utility employees (11)
- 5 for slingshot-makers and politicians (10)
- 6 for lion-tamers and matadors (8)
- 7 for cheats and liars (9)
- 8 for boxers and bullies (9)
- 9 for admen and promoters (9)
- 10 for black marketeers and money-grubbers (8)
- 11 for lechers and ladies of the evening (8)
- 12 for leeches and hangers-on (8)
- 13 for the fast crowd (8)
- 14 for polluters and poisoners (8)
- 15 for party girls and bon vivants (8)
- 16 for gurus and philosophers (8)
- 17 for farmers and countrymen (9)

In Name Only

Jay found some unusual names in the Toronto phone book, which seems to be a fountain of oddities. The first group includes last names with an abundance of consonants; Dan BMD, Squale GNEO, Tom GHYCZY, Alex GNAJ, Lena KRSKA, Georgie SRHAH, Pawela BRZRSKI, Mischa GTINSZE, Piotr BSZKO, Issa QUBTI, Campbell CZYZYK, Zelko GMAZ, Al KCANN and K. MRKIC.

The next group contains names like the English poet Alfred NOYES--positive, negative, or undecided: Johnnie OH, John O, J. NO, J. NONO, Andy WYNOTT and Johnnie YESNO.

Jay looked for female last names and found a large number of them in the A-section alone: Abbey/Abbie/Abby, Addie/Addy, Adele, Agapay, Agatha, Agness, Augusta, Aida, Ainsley/Ainslie, Alanna, Alba, Albina, Alexa/Alexis, Alison/Allison, Aloise, Amber, Amoretta, Andreola, Angela/Angelica, Annabelle, Anett/Anette, Annis, Antoinette, Aprile, Aquilina, Arletta/Arlotta, Ashley/Ashleigh/Ashly, Asta, Aubrie, Augusta/Augustina, Aurelia, Aurora, Averill/Averille, and Azeeza/Aziza.

Gang Wordplay

A recent TV documentary on Los Angeles prisons discussed gang rivalry behind bars, focusing on two of the most well-known rival LA gangs, the Crips and the Bloods. The Bloods extend the rivalry to a letter-substitution wordplay in their speech. They substitute Bs for Cs in words. The examples that one gang member gave included BANDY, BOFFEE, BOBOA, and BIGARETTE.

Double Palindromes

Peter Newby has defined a double palindrome as a sentence palindrome composed of word palindromes. This appears to be a special case of

Dmitri Borgmann's perfect palindrome, defined on page 55 of *Language on Vacation*: one with palindromic and reversal words balanced on the center point. Peter cites MUM SAW DAD WAS MUM as a perfect palindrome but not a double palindrome, and DID HANNAH PEEP? HANNAH DID as a perfect and a double palindrome.

The Midland Bank

"In the U.K.," writes Peter Newby, "one of the leading financial institutions is the Midland Bank with its motto as 'the listening bank' and it is a recently acquired wholly owned subsidiary of the Shanghai & Hong Kong Bank whilst New Bybwen's Knab Bank is known as 'the nibbling bank' (from KNAB vb to nibble). This, too, has been the subject of a foreign takeover. A Transylvanian group, thinking it to be a blood bank, recently acquired a majority shareholding and issued a new piece of plastic, the Dracula Lu Card ' for use in listening blood banks.' LU, in Pear's Advanced Word-Puzzler's Dictionary, means 'to listen'."

Ed, Undecillion in Oil-Liced Nude

In this dialogue, an extremely wealthy couple argue about their oil investments. Each quote is a palindrome with a very large number in it.

Pam: "Last septillion in oil lit pests, Al."

Al: "No ill in one nonillion?"

Pam: "Last octillion in oil lit cots, Al."

Al: "No! Ill? I bat a billion."

Pam: "No, I'll ice Dan. A decillion!"

Al: "Map set on decillion in oil-liced notes, Pam."

Pam: "No ill-iced decillion?"

Al: "No ill-iced, er, tredecillion."

Pam: "Rat! Centillion in oil-lit nectar."

Al: "O, got 'em! It's no ill. It costs octillions. Time to go."

Abbreviated Lettershifts

Like words, abbreviations of persons, places, and things can shift to other words, names, and abbreviations. The most well-known example of an abbreviated lettershift is IBM-HAL from the movie 2001, in which HAL was the name of an IBM computer. Here are a few three-letter and four-letter abbreviations, some of which shift to meaningful counterparts.

USA	JFK	CIA	IRS	RIP	VIP	UFO	PGA
GEM	SOT	YEW	FOP	DUB	HUB	TEN	DUD
LSD	IRA	PBS	ESP	NBC	LBJ	LAPD	USAF
BIT	FOX	OAR	THE	EST	CSA	APES	CAIN
NBA	ERA	CBS	DST	CNN	OAS	UAW	IBM
QED	HUD	ONE	LAB	TEE	SEW	YEA	PIT
GUT	BOX	BAR	ODE	ALL	COG	EKG	WPA
							ATE
							HAL

The Contronymic Letter X

A contronym word has definitions that are opposite to each other. Which letter of the alphabet is contronymic? X has several pairs of opposite meanings. Can you add any to these?

X crosses off a spot

X marks the spot

X means a loving kiss

X means a forbidden act, X-rated

X means the signature of a known person who can't write

X means an anonymous person, Mr. X

X is the multiplication symbol that brings numbers together

X is the variable that has an unknown value

X is the Roman numeral always meaning 10

X is a variable in algebra

X-Words

Many words have euphemistic terms that replace them in polite company. DAMN becomes DARN, DANG, etc. But rarely is a word so well-known yet so offensive that it's referred to by its initial letter followed by the word WORD. Until recently, F-WORD was, as far as I know, the only example. Everyone knows what the F-WORD is, and everyone realizes the power it has. It is taboo because it refers to the sex act.

With the O.J. Simpson trial, a new X-word was instantly born, N-WORD. The N-WORD came into being when newscasters, faced with having to quote Mark Fuhrman's use of the racial slur, coined N-WORD as a substitute. It's surprising that F-WORD originated before N-WORD. The N-WORD is basically a cruel and explosive word with little use other than the most derogatory, but the F-WORD has many uses ranging from humorous to threatening.

Have there been any other X-words?

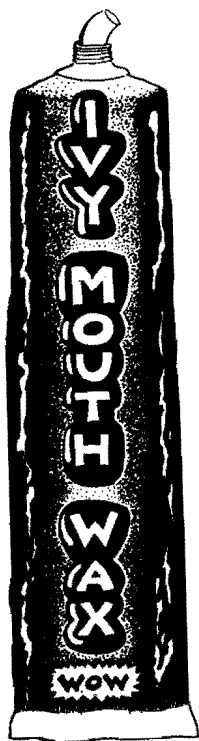
Advertising Wordplay

Precision Design, a barber shop in Iowa City, has this slogan: "If your hair isn't becoming to you, you should be coming to us."

From Headline to Charade

The last Kickshaws had a 19-letter headline that fit into a palindromic sentence. Recently the Des Moines Register had this headline in the entertainment section: METRO OPERA SEASON OPENS FRIDAY WITH 'SWEENEY TODD'. It looks normal enough, but the first 21 letters form a charade: ME, TROOP? ERASE A SON, O PENS! Can you find a longer headline charade?

A Tube of Wordplay



A few years ago, Ross Eckler coined the product name IVY MOUTH WAX for a brand of toothpaste. That brand contains all the letters that are vertically symmetrical, a pangram of the mirror alphabet. A product like that deserves a tube of its own, so I drew it. Later I showed the drawing to a friend and explained there was something very odd about it. I pointed to the living room mirror and said, "The letters on my T-shirt are reversed in the mirror, but the letters on the tube aren't." She was surprised, and she asked, as if inquiring about a magic trick, "How did you do that?" I explained it, but later on, after much reflection, I knew what I should've said:

WITH A TWO-WAY AXIOM, I MAY MIX A MAXIMUM HOOT WITH A TAXI TOOT TO HIT THAT HOT YATATA YATATA

Of course, she might've told me TOW A TOYOTA TO OT-TUMWA, IOWA or even worse THAW A TOMATO AT AN AUTOMAT AT OAHU, HAWAII. To which I could've only replied WHOA! WHAT A WIT.

A fair number of other words are vertical mirror reversals: YOUTH, WITHOUT, TIMOTHY. A few personal names are, too: TIMMY, TOMMY, TAMMY, MATT, MIMI, VITO, TITO. And a few car names: YAMAHA, MAXIMA. As shown above, IOWA and HAWAII are two-way state names. Can you think of two more states and a Canadian city?

Nickelodeon's Farm

In a children's video on Nickelodeon, a little girl in bib overalls sings a song with the following part:

"Have you seen my friend?
His name is Drew,
He's a big brown cow.
He goes Moo Moo Moo."

Here in the heart of the heartland, we have a special name for male cows. We call them "bulls."

Nor-r-r-r-r-r-m!

The most dedicated barfly on the TV series Cheers is named Norm, but he isn't the norm. He's a modern Falstaff whose real name is George Wendt. When Cheers ended its brilliant career, viewers wondered about the future of their favorite actors. CBS advertised the actor it had acquired with this punning tune that required ignoring the correct past perfect tense of GO, but that's only fitting. Here are some of the lines in the commercial tune, but you'll have to improvise your own music:

You asked where George Wendt (George Wendt, George Wendt)

Where George Wendt has went (has went, has went)
 We know where George Wendt (George Wendt, George Wendt)
 George Wendt has went to CBS.

A Brit on Yankee Political Ideology

On a logoeditorial note, Ben Pewtery writes "DAN, according to the OED, is a 'modern affectation' applied as a title of respect to a poet. But what was the former vice president the poet of? We are all familiar with his ingenious spelling of the South American plant with an edible tuber as POTATOE; but, surely, that was merely to avoid confusion with the Italian plural of the same plant (POTATO, singular POTATI)? If he was not the 'Dan' of the farinaceous tuber, then what? Once more, the OED supplies the answer. Apart from being an obsolete form of such diverse creatures as the quail and the whale, QUALE also means 'death, destruction, mortality.' May I suggest that, partly acknowledging his gallant service with the National Guard, he be acknowledged as your 'Poet of Death,' a title he more than justified by helping to kill off the Grand Old Party, thereby ushering in the era of Mrs. Clinton's 'spokesperson,' the equally heroic and literate BILL ('the bellow of a bitter' according to the OED). Incidentally, one who wishes to be known as a CLINTONITE is, according to that same authority, merely a rock!"

Spare 'em

Ben Pewtery has solved the medical mystery which has been dominating the British TV news bulletins and has appeared on CNN in the US: "All this brouhaha about the current low sperm count is nonsense," he ejaculated. "It's purely a cyclical thing. The count has varied over the centuries..."

He illustrates the point by standard alphanumerics (A = 1, B = 2, etc.) showing that the modern spelling as SPERM totals 71 and that earlier forms had such counts as SPERME 76, SPEARME 77, SPARME 72 and SPARM 67. To my way of thinking the term SPEARME seems somehow Freudian.

Haiku for the Hayfever Season

"Hai - hai - hai - hai - hai -
 KU! Haiku! Haiku! Haiku!
 HAIKU!" "Gesundheit!"

Transposal Test

To test how easy it really is to make a multi-word transposal of a random word, I chose 26 words of six to twelve letters from Webster's Seventh Collegiate by turning to a page and pointing to a word. Excluding uncommon words, I picked the first ones I found. Shuffling Scrabble tiles for a minute or so for each word produced the following:

ALCHEMY clay hen
 BARBARISM AY: bar, rib
 CAPITOL tail cop

NOGGIN in gong
 OXIDIZE Oz, Dixie
 PERMAFROST former past

DEVASTATION note: vast aid
 EDUCATION I counted "A"
 FISHERMAN he rams fin
 GERUND rug end
 HABITUAL a halibut
 IMPRUDENCE mere cup din
 JASMINE jam sine
 KIMONO OK, I'm on
 LAMBKIN lab mink
 MALCONTENT molten cant

QUARRY RR Quay
 RANDOM nor mad
 SHRAPNEL her plans
 TRAVELER art revel
 UNDERFOOT tour of den
 VOLATILE a vile lot
 WEDDING wend, dig
 XYLOPHONE holy ox pen!
 YARDBIRD dry braid
 ZODIAC I, Oz cad

One of these (KIMONO I'm on OK) can be found in *The New Anagrammasia*, and a second one (VOLATILE a live lot) is a near-match. Among the others, only FISHERMAN and EDUCATION have any anagrammic merit.

The Great Vowel Shift at Sea

According to CNN, the most popular names for United States boats are OBSESSION, ODYSSEY and OSPREY. Apparently U-boats have been replaced by O-boats.

Longest Word in a Headline

The Cedar Rapids Gazette had a one-word headline that must rank as the longest ever to appear as the banner of a story. The word and headline, including ellipses, appears exactly like this:

....YouscreamIscreamweallscreamforicecream....

It wasn't defined in the story, so I'm not sure of its meaning. Nor am I sure how to pronounce it, but this probably comes close: yo-us-cray-ahm-iss-cray-ahm-way-awls-cray-ahm-foe-ris-eh-cray-ahm. It's a remarkable word in more ways than one. If you look at it carefully, you'll notice that it forms a charade that makes so much sense that the two seem to have been made for each other: YOU SCREAM I SCREAM WE ALL SCREAM FOR ICE CREAM.

Negatorio: Questions and Answers

Is an individual sane who roams about aimlessly? NO, MAD.
 Can an evil person be admitted to probationary membership in a religious community full of virtue? NO, VICE.
 Can a celebrity sit down in the chair and fill out these forms? NOT ABLE. Why not? NO TABLE.
 If I get there by 12:00 PM, will I be late? NO, ON TIME.
 Nevertheless, can we watch the movie when all the seats are taken? NOT WITH STANDING.
 Should I keep the harmful bills? NO, X IOU'S.
 Will you let me know when we're finished? NOT IF I.. ER..

First and Last Name Shifting

Many last names shift to first names by moving an equal number of

alphabetic steps from each letter in one word to generate the other word. Most are partial shifts, but a few full shifts exist. When I tried my own last name, MORICE, I was surprised to find that MOR shifted 20 steps to GIL..., my father's first name. A student of mine shifted her last name, BERRY, and it turned up .ANN... Her first name is ANNE which is close enough.

Ross Eckler used a national computer database to find the lettershift names below. The number in parentheses indicates how many people share the same name. If full first name listings were included, some of the counts would be larger. For instance, adding the listings for ARTHUR JACKSON to those for ART JACKSON would up the total to 661.

ART JACKSON (349)	.TOM.. KNIGHT (54)	.ANN COBB (47)	JUDY.. GRAVES (17)	.JOE. HINDS (8)
ART.. HYATT (5)	PATRICK ..CARL. (4)	GAIL KEMP (4)	.TED FALK (2)	SUE.. MOYER (2)
.JOE... TINDALL (2)	VINCENT .DIX... (1)	SHELLEY LAX.... (1)	.PETER PETIT. (1)SUE STURGIS (1)

The Dirty Dozen

The letter strings in this list shift to twelve different words. What are they? Why are they shifted to these letters in particular?

DOX, FIQXHQ, JSYV, KNAJ, MQOPB, POF, PWPGPY, VYQ, WKUHH, WRWN, YOD, ZLCLU

Reverse Lettershifts

THEM doesn't have any regular lettershift matches, but ten steps down the alphabet is DROW, which in reverse is WORD. THEM and WORD form a reverse lettershift pair. There may be as many of them as normal lettershifts. In this small sampling, the shift appears under the starting word with the reverse in parentheses below it.

DUNK	CALM	HEAR	BEES	ALLOY	GHOST
1 EVOL	2 ECNO	4 LIEV	10 LOOC	3 DOORB	12 STAEP
(LOVE)	(ONCE)	(VEIL)	(COOL)	(BROOD)	(FEATS)

When printed next to each other, some of the pairs become two-word lettershift palindromes. DUNK LOVE is a suggestive example. It's difficult to combine pairs to make longer ones that make sense, but it can be done.

In the lettershift palindrome BARK BY PALM PODS, BE NUDE, the first three words shift three steps to EDUN EB SDOP which in reverse gives the last three words. Because BARK has several meanings, the sentence can be

interpreted in more than one way. Does BARK refer to a yapping sound, a tree's outer cover, a sailing ship, or...? Is it a noun or a verb? How would you interpret it?

Weird Words of Webster

One of the wonders of browsing through Webster's Second Unabridged is discovering weird words. Here are a few that I've run across recently.

SAVAN incorrect for SAVANT So if I misspell SAVAN, does that make it correct?

AVISION a vision Whoever wrote that definition was avisionary.

WLITE to gaze, look Then a gazer or looker must be a wliter, a creative wliter.

ONE OLD CAT see CAT What is the plural? SOME OLD CATS? MANY OLD CATS? A WHOLE LOT OF OLD CATS?

VALLEY BREEZE a breeze that blows up valleys on clear days What about on rainy days? In fact, what is a rainy day? If you look it up...

RAINY DAY a day when it rains much Now that we've gotten that cleared up, what in the world is a SUNNY DAY? It's not listed in the dictionary.

TIG to run about, as cattle pestered by flies Nowadays they call it JOGGING.

LOVE to appraise As in "I love you at \$100"?

It's Primary Time

The race is on! The presidential race, that is, and it's got a full line-up ready for the primaries. Who do you think will win? Here's a selection of anagrams that may help you figure out the answer.

WILLIAM CLINTON I'll not claim win
NEWT GINGRICH get win, Grinch
PHIL GRAMM gr? limp ham
LAMAR ALEXANDER a mad lax learner

ROBERT DOLE elder robot
PAT BUCHANAN a nut--ban chap!
PETE WILSON to win, sleep

Note that PETE WILSON has both WIN and LOSE among his letters!

Di's Poem

When Princess Di(ana) married Prince Charles, they fascinated the world. Now, although separated, they still make the news. While browsing through the dictionary, I noticed that their romance is chronicled from the faint stirring of love to the final dissolving of marriage in words beginning with DIS-. With a little capitalization, punctuation, and spacing, Di's Poem comes to life and tells a sad tale indeed.

Disinterested? Di's interested.
Dishonest? Di's honest.
Disrespectful? Di's respectful.
Disloyal? Di's loyal.
Disappointed? Di's appointed.
Dispassionate? Di's passionate.

Disengaged? Di's engaged.

Discharge Di's charge.

Dispose Di's pose.

Dismantle Di's mantle.

Disrobe Di's robe.

Discourage Di's courage.

Disgrace Di's grace.

Dishonor Di's honor.

Di spirited? Dispirited.

Di's satisfied? Dissatisfied.

Di's taste? Distaste.

Di's composed? Discomposed.

Di's pleasure? Displeasure.

Di's temper? Distemper.

Di's solution? Dissolution.

If Poets Wrote National Enquirer Headlines...

WOMAN WEEPS FOR SATANIC SWEETIE "By woman wailing for her demon lover"
(Samuel Coleridge, Kubla Khan)

PREGNANT BOY GIVES BIRTH TO FULL-GROWN MAN "The child is father of the
man" (William Wordsworth, My Heart Leaps Up)

TINY PLANET DISCOVERED ON BEACH "To see a World in a Grain of Sand"
(William Blake, Auguries of Innocence)

BIZARRE RITUALISTIC NIGHTTIME BURNINGS PLAGUE TIGERS "Tyger! Tyger!
burning bright in the forests of the night" (Blake, The Tyger)

MAN RETURNS FROM HELL, COMPARES IT TO LONDON "Hell is a city much like
London, a populous and smoky city" (Percy Shelley, Peter Bell the
Third)

BIRD SURVIVES WINTER BY SINGING IN WOMAN'S ESOPHAGUS "Ask me no more
whither doth haste the nightingale when May is past, for in your sweet
dividing throat she winters, and keeps warm her note" (Thomas Carew, A
Song)

HUMAN BRAINS WED; BODILESS BOND DECLARED LEGAL "Let me not to the
marriage of true minds admit impediments" (Shakespeare, Sonnet 116)

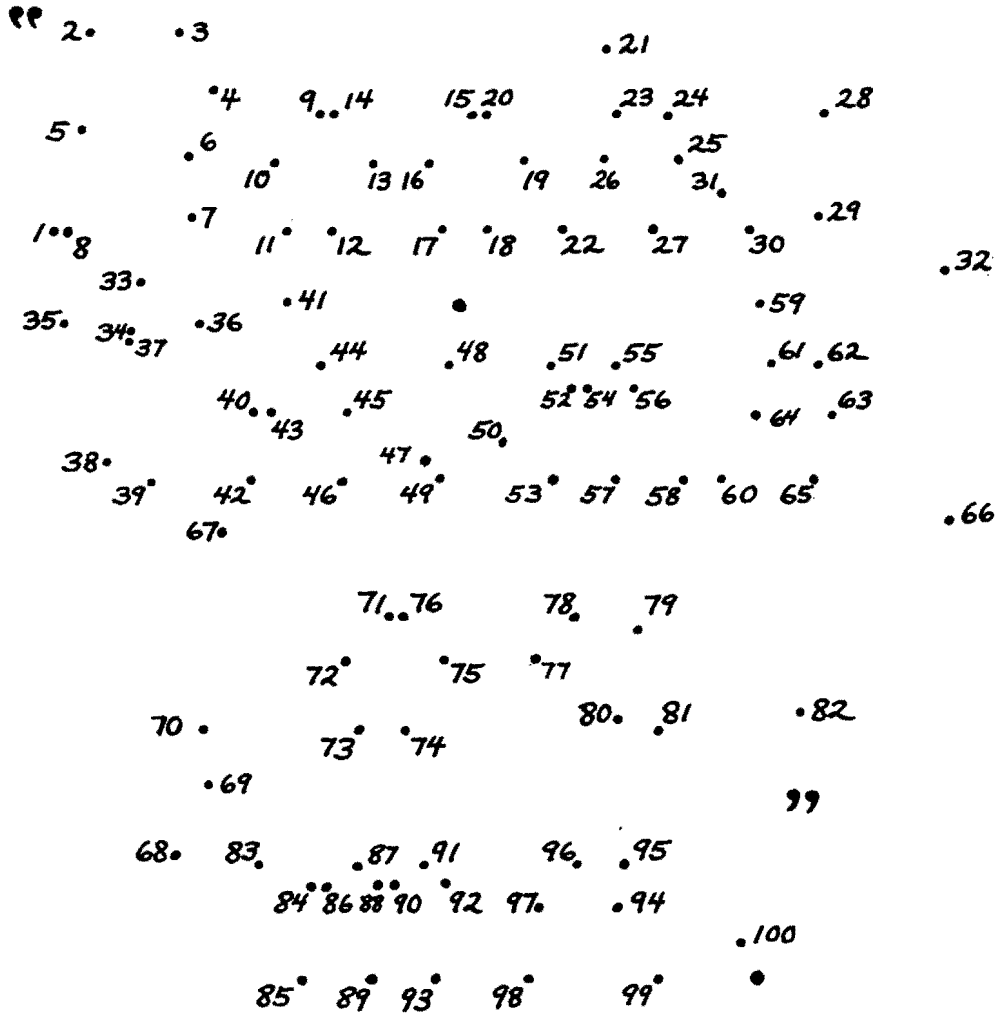
SPIRITS FROM BEYOND GRAVE HAVE FAST SEX "Speed the soft intercourse from
soul to soul" (Alexander Pope, Eloisa to Abelard)

SEERS PREDICT APOCALYPSE, DISAGREE ON DETAILS "Some say the world will
end in fire, some say in ice" (Robert Frost, Fire and Ice)

Making the Connection

Here's a quote of Charles Lamb (1775-1834), but it could've been said
by Lewis Carroll's Alice. As the title suggests, just draw a line from
dot to dot following the numbers 1-100.

CONNECT-THE-DOT QUOTE



— Charles Lamb

THE CITY OF WORDPLAY

